



## How to Fight Back Against Sustainable Development

For the past 15 years my efforts against Agenda 21 and Sustainable Development have been single-minded — get the message out to tell people about what it is and why it is dangerous to our way of life. All of our materials, special reports, hand outs, speeches, radio and television interviews, and DVDs have been created for that purpose.



However, we have had so much success over the past year in getting that message out that we are now faced with a new problem. People are getting the message. They know what the problem is. So they are asking the next logical question — how do we fight back? It sounds like an easy question to be put to someone like me who has worked on the issue and sounded the alarm for so long. But in fact, actually having success in organizing people to fight Sustainable Development in their local communities is a very new thing.

I could blow smoke at them and pretend I know the answer. That would just be sending lambs to the slaughter. It's easy to stand in front of a friendly audience and dazzle them with facts and figures, get them riled and then tell them to charge down to city council as I make a quick exit from town. And I have done that many times. The truth is, however, I have never stood in front of city councils or county commissions and endured their sarcasm as I tried to question their policies or explain where it comes from.

So, now, as more and more call my office asking what to do next, I felt it was vital that I learn firsthand how to fight back and then share that experience to make our fight more effective and eventually successful in stopping Sustainable Development. That's what I've been doing in my local community for the past five months. I've also been traveling across the state of Virginia, working with local activists in their communities and learning from them. Recently, I joined fellow Virginia activist Donna Holt as we presented the case against sustainable development to the staff of Virginia Attorney General Ken Cuccinelli. We have also been successful so far in working with the Virginia legislature to move a bill that will end mandatory comprehensive development plans in local communities. The sustainabilists have been using legislation passed in Virginia in 2007 as an effective weapon to force the policy on local communities. It hasn't passed yet, but we forced it out of committee over the objections of the Virginia Speaker of the House. That alone was a victory in that it started debate on the issue, something that has been missing at the state level. Such legislative action can serve as a model for legislators around the nation.



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The fight has only begun, but I and these fellow activists are learning a lot. So, to help all of the movement to take on the fight in their community, I want to share what we've learned so far.

### **Be Aware of the World in Which Your Elected Officials Live**

To begin the effort to fight back against Sustainable Development, it is vital to first understand the massive structure you are facing. You need to know who the players are and you need to understand the political world your officials are operating in. This may help you to understand that they aren't all evil globalists, but, perhaps, good people who are surrounded by powers that won't let them see the reality of the policies they are helping to implement. I'm certainly not making excuses for them, but before you rush in and start yelling about their enforcing UN policies on the community, here are some things you should consider.

In most communities, your mayor, city council members, and county commissioners are automatically members of national organizations like the National Conference of Mayors, National League of Cities, and the national associations for city council members, and the same for commissioners. Those in the state government also have the National Governors Association and state legislators have their national organization. For the past 15 years or more, each and every one of these national organizations has been promoting Sustainable Development. The National Mayors Conference and the Governors Association have been leaders in this agenda, many times working directly with UN organizations to promote the policy. This is the message your local elected leaders hear — from the podium; from fellow officials from other communities; from “experts” they've been told to respect; in committee meetings; from dinner speakers; from literature they are given at such meetings. They are told of legislation that will be soon be implemented, and they are even provided sample legislation to introduce in their communities.

There is also a second horde involved in the sustainablist invasion: state and federal agency officials including EPA agents, air and water quality agents, Interior Department officials, HUD officials, energy officials, Commerce Department officials, and on and on — all targeting your locally elected officials with policy, money, regulations, reports, special planning boards, meetings, and conferences, all promoting the exact same agenda.

And don't forget the news media, both locally and nationally, is also promoting the Sustainablist agenda and attacking anyone not going along, and is ready to quickly use the “extremist” label. The message is clear: Sustainable Development is reality — it is politically correct, necessary, unquestionable — and it has consensus.

Is your head spinning yet? Think of the effect all of this has on a poor local official who just thought he would run for office and serve his community. This is his reality. This is what he thinks government is supposed to be because, after all, everyone he is dealing with says so.

Now, as he is surrounded by all of these important, powerful folks, along comes a local citizen who tells him that some guy named Tom DeWeese says all of these programs are from the UN and are taking away our liberty. Who? He said what? Come on, I'm not doing that. And I don't have time to talk about it. I have another meeting to go to.

If we are going to successfully fight Agenda 21, it is vitally important that we all recognize this reality as we plan to deal with it and defeat it. With that in mind, I offer the following ideas.

### **How to Fight Back**



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**Research:** Don't even begin to open up a fight until you know certain details. First, who are the players in your community? What privately funded "stakeholder" groups are there? What is their agenda? What other communities have they operated in? What projects? What results? Who are their members in your community? Are they residents or did they come from "out of town?" (That could prove to be valuable information later in the fight). Finding this information may be the hardest of your efforts. They like to operate out of the spotlight. It's not likely that the town will carry official documentation of who it is working with. It probably will require that you attend lots of meetings and hearings. Take note of who is there and their role. Do this quietly. Don't announce to the community what you are doing. Don't make yourselves a target. You may have to ask questions and that may raise some eyebrows. But stay out of the way as much as possible.

Second, get all the details on the plans your community is working on. Has there already been legislation passed? Most of this information can be found on the town website. Knowing this information will help you put together a plan of action. Once you have it, you can begin to take your fight public.

With the information you have gathered, begin to examine the effect the policies will have on the community and its residents. Find who the victims of the legislation may be. This will be of great value as you confront city council. People understand victim stories — especially if it is them. It is the best way to undermine the process.

You will find that Conservation Easements have raised taxes as much of the county land is removed from the tax rolls — someone has to make up for the lost revenue and the payment of easements. Are "stakeholder" groups helping to get landowners to sign up for the easements — and if so — do they get any kind of kickbacks? Who are getting the easements? You may find the rich land owners have found a great loophole to cut their own property taxes as the middle class pays for it.

Does the community plan call for reduction of energy use? If so, look for calls for energy audits and taxes on energy use. The audits mean that the government has set a goal to reduce energy use. It will follow that government agents are going to come into your home to inspect your energy use. Then they are going to tell you what must be done in your home to cut usage. That will cost you money. Don't fall for the line that it is all voluntary — to help you save money. They haven't gone to this much trouble to be ignored. Regulations are not voluntary.

These are just a couple of examples of what to look for as you do your research. There are many more, including meters on wells to control water use, smart meters on your thermostat to take away your control of your thermostat; non-elected boards and councils to control local development and implement smart growth, leading to population growth; Public/Private Partnerships with local and large corporations to "go Green"; creation of open space; pushing back live stock from streams; enforcing sustainable farming methods that restrict energy and water use in farming practices; and much more. It all leads to higher costs and shortages, in the name of environmental protection and conservation.

Your goal is to stop Sustainable Development in your community. That means to stop the creation of non-elected regional government councils that are difficult to hold accountable. It means to stop local governments from taking state and federal grants that come with massive strings attached to enforce compliance. And it means you must succeed in removing outsider organizations and Stakeholder groups that are pressuring your elected officials to do their bidding.

## **Civic Action**

Armed with as much information as you can gather (and armed with the ability to coherently discuss its



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details) you are ready to take your battle to the public. First, it would be better for you to try to discuss it privately with some of your elected officials, especially if you know them. Tell them what you have found and explain why you are opposed. First discuss the effects of the policies on the average citizen. Explain why they are bad. Slowly bring the conversation around to the origin of such policies — Agenda 21 and the UN. Don't start there. It is important that you build the case to show that these policies are not local, but part of a national and international agenda. If this conversation does not go well (and it probably won't), then you have to take it to the next level — to the public.

Begin a two-fold campaign. First, write a series of letters to the editor for the local newspaper. Make sure that you are not alone. Coordinate your letters with others who will also write letters to back up and support what you have written. These will generate more letters from others, some for your position and other against you. Be prepared to answer those against you as they are probably written by those "Stakeholders" who are implementing the policies in the first place. This may be a useful place for you to use what you've learned about these groups to discredit them.

Second, begin to attend Council meetings and ask questions. The response from the council members will determine your next move. If you are ignored and your questions met with silence or hostility, prepare a news release detailing your questions and the background you have as to why you asked those questions. Pass the news release out to the people at the next meeting as well as the news media. Attend the next meeting and demand answers. Be sure to organize people to come with you. Don't try this alone. If necessary, have demonstrators outside city hall carrying signs or handing out flyers with the name and picture of the officials who won't answer your questions along with the question you asked — including the details you have about the policy.

The point in all of this is to make the issue public. Take away their ability to hide the details from the public. Expose the hoards of outsiders who are dictating policy in your community. Force the people you elected to deal with YOU — not the army of self-appointed "stakeholders" and government officials. Shine a very bright spotlight on the rats under the rock. If the newspaper is with you, great, but you will probably find it with the other side.

It may be difficult to get a fair shake in the newspaper or on radio. That's why you deliver your news releases to both the media and the public. Get signs and flyers in stores if necessary. And keep it up for as long as it takes. Have the tenacity of the folks in Egypt who would not leave the demonstration until they had acquired victory.

The final step is to use the energy you have created to run candidates for office against those who have ignored and fought you. Ultimately, that is the office holders' worst nightmare and may be the most effective way to get them to respond and serve their constituents.

### **Fighting ICLEI**

If ICLEI is in your city, the details about Agenda 21 and the UN connection is easier. Your community is paying them dues with your tax dollars. Here is how to handle them: if your council derides your statements that their policies come from the UN's Agenda 21, simply print out the home page from ICLEI's website — [www.iclei.org](http://www.iclei.org). This will have all of the UN connections you've been talking about, in ICLEI's own words. Pass out the web page copies to everyone in the chamber audience and say to your elected officials, "don't call me a radical simply for reporting what ICLEI openly admits on its own web site. I'm just the one pointing it out — you are the ones who are paying our tax dollars to them." Then demand that those payments stop. You have proven your case.



## Stopping Consensus Meetings

Most public meetings are now run by trained and highly paid facilitators whose jobs is to control the meeting and bring it to a preplanned conclusion. If he is good at his job, the facilitator can actually make the audience think the “consensus” they have reached on an issue or proposal is actually their idea. This is how Sustainable Development is being implemented across the nation, especially in meetings or planning boards that are advertised as open to the public. They really don't want you there and the tactic is used to move forward in full view of the public without them knowing what is happening. There is nothing free or open about the consensus process. It is designed to eliminate debate and close discussion.

To bust up the process you must never participate, even to answer a question. To do so allows the facilitator to make you part of the process. Instead, you must control the discussion. Here is a quick suggestion on how to foul up the works. Never go alone to such a meeting. You will need at least three people — the more the better. Do not sit together. Instead, fan out in the room in a triangle formation. Know ahead of time the questions you want to ask: Who is the facilitator? What is his association with the organizers? Is he being paid? Where did these programs (being proposed) come from? How are they to be funded?

One question to ask over and over again, both at facilitated meetings and city council meetings, is this: “With the implementation of this policy, tell me a single right or action I have on my property that doesn't require your approval or involvement. What are my rights as a property owner?” Make them name it. You will quickly see that they too understand there are no property rights left in America.

By asking these questions, you are putting his legitimacy in question, building suspicion among the rest of the audience, destroying his authority. He will try to counter, either by patronizing and humoring you, at first, or, then becoming hostile, moving to have you removed as a disruptive force. That's where the rest of your group come in. They need to back you up, demand answers to your questions. If you have enough people in the room, you can cause a major disruption, making it impossible for the facilitator to move forward with his agenda. Do not walk out and leave the room to him. Stay to the end and make him shut down the meeting.

### **In Conclusion ...**

These suggestions on how to fight back are, admittedly, very basic and elementary. They are meant only to be a guideline. You will have to do your homework and adapt these tactics to your local situation. These tactics are designed to create controversy and debate to force the Agenda 21 issue out of the secret meetings and into public debate where they belong. Many of these same tactics can be used at all levels of government, right up and into the state legislature. Our plan is to demand answers from elected officials who want to ignore us. They must be taught that such actions have consequences.

As we learn new, successful tactics, I'll share them with activists across the nation. The American Policy Center is now in the process of creating a new website devoted to Sustainable Development where activists across the nation can share their findings, successful tactics and research with the rest of the movement. The website, not yet in action, is [www.sustainabledevelopment.com](http://www.sustainabledevelopment.com). Watch for it.

The exciting news is that, finally, Americans are beginning to understand that Agenda 21 is destroying our nation and they are beginning to fight back. The battle to stop the UN's Agenda 21 is flaming across the nation.

***Tom DeWeese** is one of the nation's leading advocates of individual liberty, free enterprise, private*



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